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CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

The Catholics of Rochester can boast of having one of their faith amongst the founders of the episcopal city in the person of Charles Carroll of Bellevue.¹ He came here from Hagerstown, Md., and in 1803 purchased, with Nathaniel Rochester and William Fitzhugh, the One Hundred Acre tract near the Upper Falls of the Genesee River. This was laid out in lots in 1811, and the settlement was actually begun in the following year.

At that time Catholic immigrants throughout northern, central, and western New York were in charge of the pastors of St. Mary's Church in Albany. Thus early settlers had to cover three hundred miles, generally on foot or at best on any available conveyance, in order to hear Mass, to go to confession and communion, to have a child baptized, or to receive the other sacraments. A pioneer Catholic, John McGuire, who often made this laborious journey over the wild and dangerous road through the woods, requested the priest stationed at Albany to come to Rochester once a year, or at least once in two or three years, to visit the dispersed sheep of Christ's flock there. The zealous priest would have been glad to come, but the great distance, the impossibility of leaving alone his own flock during the time required for such a visit, and the lack of means presented insurmountable difficulties.² At times a vacancy at Albany even compelled Catholics to push on to New York for spiritual ministrations. The Klems of Rochester and the Kernans of Steuben County had to submit to such hardships of pioneer life in order to have a child baptized.³

Conditions such as these led "the Most. Rev. and Right Rev.

¹ Tombstone in cemetery of Groveland, N. Y.: "Chas. Carroll of Bellevue was born at Carrollsburg in the State of Maryland (now the city of Washington) on the 7 of Nov. 1767 and died in the Township of Groveland the 28 of Oct. 1823 in the 56th year of his age."

² *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*, Heft XXIV, (1852), p. 20.

³ Cf. Bishop McQuaid in C. A. SHRINER, *Hist. of Cath. Ch. in Paterson*, pp. 77-78; also Bishop McQuaid, Sermon at Month's Mind of Abp. Corrigan, June 11, 1902; also HERMANN PFÄFFLIN, *Early German Settlers* in PECK, *Hist. of Rochester*, p. 483. Rochester, 1884; BISHOP TIMON, *Missions in Western New York, and Church History of the Diocese of Buffalo*, p. 208. Buffalo, 1862.

Fathers, the Archbishop of Baltimore and the Bishops of the United States of North America, in their Provincial Council, celebrated in the month of October, 1829," to request the "Holy Father, that, because of the scarcity of priests, the distance of stations, and a custom already existing, he would grant, for all those dioceses, faculties to extend the time to fulfil the precept of Easter Communion, from the first Sunday in Lent to Trinity Sunday, both included." The Holy Father kindly granted the requested faculties on September 26, 1830.⁴ No doubt these directions in the Pastoral of the Baltimore Council (October 27, 1833), to the laity, deprived of the consoling ministration of a priest, likewise reflect more ancient customs. The similarity of circumstances, in all probability, also occasioned such customs amongst the faithful Catholic people in the Rochester district. "Let them be earnest and regular in the great duty of prayer, especially on the Lord's Day, holydays, and days of devotion; on these occasions we advise them to assemble together, if there be two or more families, and uniting in spirit with the priest who offers the holy sacrifice in their vicinity, or with the bishop of the diocese, let them at the usual hour of worship, unless some other be much more convenient, recite their form of prayer for the Mass, read some approved book for instruction or some Catholic sermon; have their children catechised; preserve and increase a spirit of charity and affection for each other; mutually encourage each other to perseverance, and consult occasionally how they might be able to procure a visit from some priest for the necessary purposes of religion. Let them cautiously abstain from vice; for it has sometimes unfortunately happened that despairing of that ministry upon which they placed their reliance, they became reckless and criminal. We assure them that, though unfortunately thus placed beyond the reach of our ministerial aid, they are dear to our hearts, are not forgotten in our suffrages; we are solicitous for their welfare, and entreat, and desire those priests, who may, by any exertion, be able to afford them the benefit of their ministry, to regard as one of their first obligations, the duty of visiting and sustaining them when at all compatible with those other functions, to which they are specially devoted."⁵

Many years before this, Bishop Connolly, the first Bishop to

⁴ *U. S. Cath. Almanac*, 1836, p. 47.

⁵ *U. S. Cath. Almanac*, 1834, p. 118 ss.

arrive in New York, realised that the faithful dispersed throughout districts far removed from a church were exposed to the danger of losing their religion. He, therefore, instructed Father Michael O'Gorman, appointed to the Albany church in 1817, to give the Catholics outside of Albany an occasional Mass in their respective places of abode in return for their contributions to his support.⁶ Thus Father O'Gorman visited the four or five Catholic families in Auburn, where he celebrated Mass, preached in the court-house, and baptized several children.⁷ To provide for the needs of an increasing Catholic population, he had a board of trustees elected at Utica, where a new church was to be built. Three of its members, Charles Carroll of the Genesee River, John McGuire of Rochester, and John O'Connor of Auburn, were inhabitants of the territory now comprised in the Rochester Diocese. In 1819, the Reverend John Farnan was appointed to this parish. The newly established rector had arduous work to cover the circuit through the western district of New York. At Auburn, he urged the Catholics to build a chapel, which was begun but given up in discouragement.⁸ In Rochester he found Catholics enough to proceed (1820) to the organization of a Catholic Society at a meeting in the Mansion House Hotel of that village, then numbering 1,502 inhabitants.⁹ Here, in the year following, the Bishop created a new parish, which comprised in its limits all that constitutes the Diocese of Rochester and Buffalo today. The Reverend Patrick Kelly was sent to minister to Auburn, Rochester, and other districts in the western parts of the State.¹⁰ He closed his energetic pastorate here with the erection of St. Patrick's church in 1823. Only two years later could another resident pastor be given to Rochester by the appointment of Father Michael McNamara. Since the completion of the aqueduct over the river for the Erie Canal, which was the first great source of Catholic employment and the avenue of Catholic emigration westward, caused a rapid

* Bishop John Connolly's *Note Book*, May 30, 1817, in BAYLEY, *Hist. Cath. Church in New York*, p. 89.

* TIMON, *Missions in Western New York*, p. 211.

* *Ibid.* This is responsible for the inaccurate statement in the *Laity's Directory* of 1822 (*Cath. Almanac*): "In Auburn, an agreeable town, there is likewise a Catholic Church recently erected."

* Rochester Chronicle, based on ELISHA ELY, *Rochester Directory*, 1827, in MONROE, *Pioneer Hist. of Phelps and Gorham Purchase*, p. 623.

¹⁰ *Cath. Almanac*, 1822.

increase in St. Patrick's parish, the new pastor found himself obliged to build a larger church. The congregation was too poor to bear the expense alone, and Father McNamara collected funds for this purpose in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and other places.¹¹

While ministration to his vast parish was somewhat lightened by the advent of a resident priest in Buffalo, difficulties at Rochester weighed heavily upon the mind of Father McNamara. In fact, he was driven out of his parish by his trustees, because his sermons displeased them.¹² This exposed him to violent attacks in the secular press of the town, and the trouble apparently made him an easy prey to disease. Father McNamara died at Chili, N. Y., August 30, 1832, aged 39.¹³ The Catholic faith was now suffering in Rochester from the evils of trusteeism, which had infected almost the whole American Church. As soon as Bishop Dubois appointed Father J. McGerry to St. Patrick's Church, the trustees refused to receive him as their pastor. Bishop McQuaid characterized their action best in his description of their letter to their Bishop: "In the archives of the diocese of Rochester we have a letter, addressed by the trustees of the only church then in western New York, a letter characterized by impertinence and insolence and shameful interference with the rights and duties of a bishop. They addressed their Bishop a letter covering four pages, with a species of humility running through it contradicted by their acts. The children of these men would be sorry today to have that letter published."¹⁴ On the other hand there can be no doubt of the conciliating spirit of Bishop Dubois. For he wrote to the newly appointed pastor under date of August 14, 1832: "As for the salary, remember that I will not consent to more than five hundred dollars being allowed yearly, until the Church is completed, vestments provided, and debts paid. I also wish a house built for the accommodation of the priest adjoining the Church."¹⁵ The trustees, however, remained obstinate in their refusal, so that the Bishop

¹¹ TIMON, *Missions, etc.*, p. 211.

¹² C. G. HERBERMANN, *John Dubois, D. D., Third Bishop of New York*, in *Hist. Records and Studies* (U. S. Cath. Hist. Soc.), vol. I, (1900), p. 338.

¹³ SHEA, *Hist. Cath. Ch.*, vol. III, p. 501. Cf. authorities there cited.

¹⁴ Bishop McQuaid, Sermon at Month's Mind of Abp. Corrigan, June 11, 1902.

¹⁵ TIMON, *Missions, etc.*, p. 214.

was finally compelled to place St. Patrick's church under an interdict. The awful scourge of the cholera then devastating Rochester made them repent and they were glad to have the ministration of Father McGerry in their affliction.

Even during these troubles, Bishop Dubois was cheered by the fruits of the apostolic labors of Father Francis O'Donoghue, who was made pastor of Salina (now a part of Syracuse), and who extended his activities to Elmira, Ithaca, Geneva, Auburn, and even Greece. Here he dedicated, under the name of St. Ambrose, the church which the zealous Catholic farmers near Greece had erected on Mt. Reed.¹⁶ At Auburn, he purchased a small Methodist meeting-house, and converted it into the first Catholic church of the place. However, hostility to Catholics had been fomented so strongly throughout the country at that time that the presence of a Catholic priest was not welcome. A young man was even surprised in the act of setting fire to the church while the poor and scanty congregation was assembled within to worship.¹⁷

Meanwhile better times had also dawned at Rochester with the advent, in December, 1832, of Father Bernard O'Reilly, later Vicar-General of Buffalo and then Bishop of Hartford, who labored here for about fifteen years with zeal and with great fruit in the performance of the duties of his pastoral charge. From the beginning, he was evidently bound to exclude any renewal of past disturbances by thorough instruction. "A Christian Doctrine Society" was organized for the purpose of aiding in the spread of religious knowledge. Statistics for 1836 show that this school, to which he gave much attention had 60 teachers, 300 pupils, and 250 volumes in the library. The same source also curiously tabulates the dimensions of St. Patrick's Church on its completion: external area in square feet 4675; area of audience room in square feet 3850; pew room in running feet 1221.¹⁸ Even the enlarged church was soon overcrowded. The means to relieve this congestion were suggested by Father John Raffener, then of New York City. He had been authorized by Bishop Dubois, March 22, 1833, "to make, with his

¹⁶ SHEA, *Hist. Cath. Ch.*, vol. III, p. 500.

¹⁷ DE COURCY-SHEA, *Cath. Ch. in U. S.*, p. 484.

¹⁸ Tabular Statements of the Churches and Sabbath-schools of Rochester, Prepared by the Rev. Tryon Edwards, &c., in O'REILLY, *Sketches of Rochester*, p. 290. Rochester, 1838.

compatriots in all parts of the diocese, whatever arrangements he judged opportune for the foundation of missions and for the building of churches wherever needed; but in the vicinity of Buffalo, he had to obtain the consent and approval of Reverend Mr. Mertz, the worthy pastor of Buffalo.”¹⁹ Father Raffener, therefore, urged the German Catholics in St. Patrick’s parish to begin a separate church, and in 1836 they purchased a building on Ely Street, where they obtained the services of a Redemptorist priest who came with the consent of the Bishop and of his own religious superiors. July 24, 1836, is the date of the first record on the Baptism Register in St. Joseph’s Church. This church’s dimensions are also curiously tabulated: external area in square feet 1530; area of audience room in square feet 1359; pew room in running feet 361.²⁰

Henry O’Reilly’s *Sketches of Rochester*, published in 1838, preserves these interesting details of the first two Catholic churches of that city. He also mentions a parochial school attached to the German church, for which its pastor, Father Prost, obtained the services of a male teacher. There were about fifty scholars in this school, “wherein the English as well as the German is taught.”²¹ It is strange that this writer makes no mention of a school in St. Patrick’s parish. However, it is said that Father O’Reilly secured the services of Michael Hughes and of his wife, Margaret L. Hughes, through Father Welch of Brooklyn, shortly after their arrival in this country. The good couple came to Rochester in May, 1835, and opened a school in the house of Dr. Bradley on North St. Paul Street, near Falls Field. As soon as the basement of St. Patrick’s Church could be turned into a school-room, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes taught there. After seven years of faithful service, they were succeeded by a Mr. Kelly in 1842, who remained but one year. Patrick Quinn then became schoolmaster, and held the position till 1848.²² These were the humble beginnings of the Rochester Parochial School System.

¹⁹ C. G. HERBERMANN, *John Dubois, D.D., Third Bishop of New York*, in *Hist. Recs. and Studies* (U. S. Cath. Hist. Soc.), 1900, I, 336. There was a later addition to this document. “I confirm and extend the authority given above to the Revd. John Raffener in all parts of this Diocese, John Hughes, Bp. N. Y. Given at New York this 3rd day of June 1843.”

²⁰ Tabular Statements, etc., by Rev. Tryon Edwards, o. c.

²¹ O’REILLY, *Sketches of Rochester*, pp. 284-288. Rochester, 1838; TIMON, *Missions in Western New York*, p. 216.

²² PECK, *Hist. of Rochester and Monroe Co.*, p. 312. Rochester, 1884.

In these early days of its existence, St. Joseph's Church also enjoyed at times the ministration of Father Neumann, whose name quite frequently appears as the minister of the sacrament in its Book of Baptisms. In fact, the saintly priest was led to the resolution of joining the Redemptorists by Father Prost, who made the Congregation known to him and also the vocation for which God had been preparing him during laborious missionary journies, especially in the Niagara region.²³ There he worked beyond his strength till at last his health gave away. When a three months' fever left him very weak, there was question of transferring him to Rochester, but he refused. "It will be easy to get a priest for Rochester; but very difficult to find one for my district. Indeed, if I fail, it will be necessary to find two."²⁴

The vacancy at St. Joseph's Church in Rochester was due to the baneful influences of trusteeism, which again threatened to ruin what had been so well begun. A few of these men were successful enough in their efforts to discourage Father Prost. He left the city of Rochester for Pittsburgh, where the first Redemptorist Convent canonically erected in this country was established in 1839. Father Czackert, who had come from Ohio in 1838 to assist him, was able to continue the ministry in Rochester for but a few more months, when he felt himself constrained to allow the trustees to rule in an empty church. The Germans were thus deprived for a whole year of the ministration of a German priest. Pious members of the congregation sent frequent invitations to Father Simon Sanderl, then engaged in the Indian Mission of Arbre Croche of Michigan. With the consent of his superiors, who were giving up the work amongst the Indians, he at length became pastor of St. Joseph's Church. When he also came into conflict with the trustees, who failed to give a satisfactory account of the Church income and expense, he publicly declared from the pulpit that he would no longer acknowledge the trustees. The congregation needed better management of its funds, since the erection of a new church was imperative. The number of German Catholic families had greatly increased in the last years, for whom there was not enough room in the old church, which was besides in a dilapidated condition. Father Sanderl, who had obtained the requisite per-

²³ MAGNIEB, *Life of Bishop John Neumann, C. SS. R.*, p. 49. New York, 1897.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

mission to build from Bishop Hughes, promised to put up a fine large church, if the members of his congregation would hand over to him the church treasury and continue to assist him with their contributions. As soon as some opposition manifested itself, he closed up the old church, determined to accept another parish rather than to submit to the evil domination of the trustees. The faithful people of the congregation then met to support Father Sanderl in the position he had taken. The trustees were induced to resign, and handed over to him \$630 in cash, the treasury of the church, and a balance of pew rents amounting to \$500. With this money, he bought a lot, and began the erection of the new St. Joseph's Church, the title of which was vested in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.²⁵

A vivid picture of the state of Catholicism in this district of his extensive diocese is given by Bishop Hughes in the brief sketch of the result of his observations during the recent episcopal visitation, which he communicated to the *Freeman's Journal*, under date of October 23, 1841.²⁶

"From Salina the next station was Auburn, where I had not time to make such delay as I could have wished. The congregation here is very small and does not appear to increase. It is visited but once a month by the pastor, who has to attend to two other congregations, those of Seneca Falls and Geneva. In this mission the only increase at present apparent is in the congregation of Seneca Falls. This is to be accounted for principally by the encouragement there afforded for manual employment, and the inducements which extensive improvements going on in that neighborhood hold out to mechanics and laborers.

"The church at Geneva has, however, had but little prosperity. It has now been erected ten years, yet the number of Catholics connected with it now are not greater than they were at the time of its erection. The state of the pecuniary affairs of this church may be quoted as an instance of that mismanagement which is but too general, unfortunately for the interests of our religion and people. This church was originally constructed at a cost of about \$2,000, of which \$1,200 were raised by subscription and paid at the time. Since then we are not aware of any improvements requiring further expenditure having been made, yet, strange as it may appear, the church now

²⁵ TIMON, o. c., p. 219.

²⁶ Kehoe, ed., Hughes's *Works*, vol. I, pp. 441-443.

stands indebted to the amount of nearly \$3,000—a sum more than double its actual value! The management of the affairs of this church has been in the hands of persons appointed in the ordinary way as trustees, whose intentions have doubtless been good, but who have, nevertheless, been so unhappy in accomplishing their designs as to present the unfortunate results just stated. There can be no doubt that some measures are absolutely essential to correct the evils of the present system of managing church property. The idea has been extensively cherished that the clergy of the Catholic Church should not interfere in the management of its temporal concerns. For my part, I believe the idea has been the cause of much detriment to religion, both as regards its spiritual progress and the temporal means that are dedicated to its support; for the consequence has been that the clergy have naturally declined all interference. They have not chosen to incur fatigue, labor, and annoyance, which would earn for them, not the gratitude of those apparently most interested, but which would bring down their censure. And yet it has been found that these same clergymen, who are not deemed competent to have even a voice in the distribution or economy of the church funds, have always been looked to as the persons whose duty it was to provide these funds. But on themselves, the effect has been that they have become less interested in proportion as they were deprived of their rights of interference and power of doing good.

“The trustees of this church were enabled to show to their own satisfaction how the strange accumulation of debt has been effected, but I confess that I could not comprehend the explanation. But neither do I entertain for one moment any other opinion than that persons had undertaken a task for which they have been by no means qualified, and without intending to mismanage the affairs of the church, that those affairs have been most unaccountably mismanaged. The very lot, or rather one of the two lots on which the church stands, and which had been paid for years ago, was allowed to remain so implicated in the general property of the individual of whom the original purchase was made, that it became subject to sale by a mortgage held by him. This lot was actually permitted to be sold, and now the additional sum of \$250 will be required for its release. This is, perhaps, a strong case in illustration of the evils of a system which requires correction. . . . It is most important for the Catholics that a more concise and responsible mode of managing the tem-

poral affairs of their churches than that which has hitherto prevailed should be introduced.

"The short period of time that I was permitted to spend at Geneva was necessarily occupied in examining into this melancholy state of the temporal affairs of that church, and as my engagements required my presence at Rochester on the following Sunday, it was not in my power to meet the assembled congregation of Geneva.

"There is, perhaps, no city or town in the Diocese in which there is a prospect of a more permanent increase in the members of the Catholic Communion than in Rochester. There are at present two churches, both large and commodious. For those who speak the English language the erection of an additional church has been deemed of pressing necessity, and measures have been taken for that purpose; whilst the number of German Catholics in and about Rochester, equally require that new provision should be made for their accommodation. Accordingly, two respectable members of the Ligorian Society, who have at present charge of the congregation, have purchased ground, and are making arrangements for the erection of a new church suited to the wants of the people. It may be remarked that Rochester was one of the first cities to introduce the principle of the temperance association. Long before it had been spoken of in any Catholic congregation in this country, and even before it had been taken up by Father Matthew in Ireland, it had been introduced in the congregation of the Rev. Mr. O'Reilly of Rochester with the happiest effects which are still visible.²⁷ Besides these congregations already established, the large and increasing numbers of Canadian and French Catholics in Rochester and its neighborhood encourage them to solicit the presence of a clergyman who could speak to them in their own language. It is not in my power at present to send them one; nevertheless, their good dispositions and zealous efforts shall not be forgotten, and as soon as the opportunity offers of engaging for them a clergyman of their own nation, it shall certainly be taken advantage of for that purpose.

"Seven miles from Rochester is the township of Greece, settled to a very considerable extent by Catholics. They have not had at all times the undivided attention of any clergyman, although one of the

²⁷ O'REILLY, *o. c.*, p. 315, speaks of the Hibernian Temperance Society in St. Patrick's Church. "This society is exercising a cheering influence, and may be made productive of still more flattering results."

first measures adopted by them after the settlement in the place was to secure the erection of a neat and appropriate church, in which now they have regular service every Sunday. The members of this congregation are for the most part agriculturists, some of them owning highly improved plantations, and all the others possessing some portion at least of the soil on which they reside. During my visit, and at their pressing solicitation to have a clergyman permanently residing amongst them, I appointed as their pastor the Rev. Denis Kelly.

"It will be seen by these hasty remarks that my time did not allow me to visit the many interesting and important congregations which are in the neighborhood of all these principal stations, both between Geneva and Rochester, and the latter place and Lockport. Not only on the main route, but also back from it, there are many scattered members of our Communion, cut off unhappily by their isolated position from enjoying the consolations of the public exercise of religion."

At Rochester, English speaking Catholics had, in fact, some eight years before, purchased a church from the Protestants on South St. Paul Street, but failure to collect the purchase money made them lose the title to the property. Consequently many hesitated to buy back the old church of St. Mary's until the warm encouragement of Bishop Hughes fired their zeal again to renewed efforts. So a second church for the Irish Catholics was established permanently in the fall of 1841.²⁸

The peace that had been established at St. Joseph's through the defeat of the trustees did not allay all dissatisfaction on the part of the malcontents. German Catholics, resident in the western part of Rochester, did not find the site central enough. Their main grievance, however, was the vesting of the title to the property in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.²⁹ So twelve men came together one night in the spring of 1842, and determined to build another church to be governed according to their own principles. Bishop Hughes was approached in New York by one of their number for permission to build. Although the Bishop was surprised at a request made so soon after the new St. Joseph's Church had provided for a larger congregation, he thought it advisable, in case there was really a need for a second German church, to give his permission

²⁸ TIMON, *o. c.*, pp. 215, 216, 218,

²⁹ TIMON, *o. c.*, p. 219,

in writing subject to the approval of the Redemptorists. These Fathers knew too well the rebellious character of the organizers of the new church, for which a lot had been purchased at the corner of King and Maple Streets. Under these circumstances, both the Redemptorists at St. Joseph's and Father Bernard O'Reilly at St. Patrick's refused to officiate at the laying of the cornerstone. Consequently the men were compelled to perform the ceremony themselves. They seized the opportunity to place a documentary protest into the cavity of the cornerstone itself. "Whereas we have been much deceived by the Redemptorist Fathers, we are going to build, in spite of them, a Catholic Church, not to be sold, alienated, or transferred, or given away to any person whomsoever, as long as the church members, one to three, oppose it."

Bishop Hughes was not the man to trifle with the dangerous situation thus created in Rochester. The petition for a priest of their own called forth a sharp reply that there was no priest available to give them, and if there had been one, he would not send him to those who erected a church in the spirit of strife and discord. He understood, however, that the matter demanded his own personal attention, and so he promised to be in Rochester within a few weeks. He arrived there, gave a hearing to the malcontents, and thoroughly instructed the misguided congregation in regard to their duties. The better element now prevailed and voted all that the Bishop desired.³⁰ There is no lack of friendly cordiality in the letter sent to Bishop Hughes by Sebastian Zeug, Nov. 14, 1842.³¹

"Right Revd. Sir,

"In accordance with your directions when here, I furnish you with a statement of the new German church, now almost complete. The church is now, with the exception of the basement, completed, and the cost of the ground on which it stands (114 by 129), with the building complete as stated above, is three thousand and one hundred dollars.

"Of this sum, we have now paid by subscriptions collected about one thousand dollars—we have other subscriptions for eight hundred dollars which will certainly be collected.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³¹ *New York Archdiocesan Archives*, Dunwoodie Seminary. Letters to the Laity to 1850. This letter disagrees completely with Bishop Timon's chronology in his *Missions in Western New York*, etc.

"We have paid with the thousand dollars . . . & Co., nine hundred more, which I raised out of the City Bank on a mortgage on my property, one-half of it to be paid on the 1st of Jan., 1843, and the other half in June, 1844.

"I would wish, Right Rev. Sir, that you would advise me as to the mode I could be secured for the nine hundred dollars now on my property. At first, I was to get, when the Church would be complete, something that would secure me against loss. I only mention the matter to put you fully in possession of the state of things with us, and that you could be so good as to adopt some measure by which I might be secured. I have no fears whatsoever of our being able to meet all our engagements through our own clergyman's exertions when we get one. Our people are united and delighted with the present prospects of our church.

"You will be so good as to answer this at your earliest convenience, and direct me as to the manner of conveying the property to you by deed, as I am anxious and so are the people to have the matter done. Our church will be ready in one month for divine service."

Bishop Hughes evidently availed himself of the services of Father Bernard O'Reilly, the pastor of St. Patrick's Church, to get the church property of St. Peter's properly deeded to himself. For his letter of February 6, 1843, could not have been addressed to anyone else, although the copy of the letter kept in the New York Archdiocesan Archives does not give the name of the person addressed.³²

"Rev. dear Sir:

"I received your letter of the 1st inst., and am very much pleased that you have taken the pains to have the deed of St. Peter's German Church made all right. It is not in my power, however, to send at this moment a clergyman, for the plain reason that I have none at my disposal. But I shall write Mr. Beyer [then pastor of St. Joseph's] to open the church & to officiate in it as often as possible until another clergyman can be procured. The German church at Utica is in like manner at this time without a pastor. Please to say to those people that, as soon as it will be in my power, I shall certainly cause divine service to be regularly performed in their church.

³² *New York Archdiocesan Archives, Dunwoodie Seminary. Copies of Letters from Arch. Hughes.*

I am glad also that you have visited Canadaigua &, since Mr. Bradley neglects it, I will be obliged to you to take it under your charge & foster the feeble plant of religion in that place as much as you can.

"Having said this much, I must now scold you for two things. One is for not writing a plainer hand, and the other for not writing your ideas with more openness and candour. The manner in which you refer to matters connected with the mission in Rochester would lead me to infer that you want confidence either in your own statement or in me. Why do you not say openly and plainly what you wish to say on that subject? . . . I would have been much more pleased, if you had said, in that spirit of frankness which I would expect you always to show, what it is you mean by reference . . . to the necessity of closing your school and the danger to some of the churches. Please to write to me fully without ambiguity on this subject."

In fact, the dangers of trusteeism were not yet all passed. This was soon discovered by Father Francis John Levitz, formerly a Franciscan missionary in Syria, who was appointed pastor of the new German church, which he reached April 23, 1843. The rulers of the congregation made his pastorate so bitter for him, that he secretly left Rochester one night to reveal the trouble in person to his Bishop. The Vicar-General, Father John Raffener, was then dispatched to make an investigation in the congregation itself. He soon learned that the majority of the people were in favor of the Franciscan Father, to whom only a few leading members were opposed. Accordingly, the Bishop sent Father Levitz back again. Nevertheless the opposition created enough trouble to make him glad to relinquish his charge after three years of service. For about three months the congregation had no priest of their own, and was, therefore, dependent upon the charitable ministry of the Redemptorist Fathers. This made the advent of a new pastor, Count Antony Berenyi of Hungary, in 1846, all the more welcome. Now at last peace seemed firmly established. The membership of the church increased from 842 to 1676; many debts were paid; fine vestments were purchased; and \$500 was expended for a new organ. The congregation was so pleased with the progress made that they determined to give their pastor a testimonial of their love and gratitude.

They bought him a riding horse, but Father Berenyi, who lived like a hermit, refused the gift. Even then a plot was forming to overthrow the peace and harmony of the congregation. A number of grocery men and saloon keepers persuaded Father Berenyi to announce the election of seven men to examine into the account books of the Church Committee, which they claimed had acted dishonestly. The pastor did not suspect any evil intentions, and had already twice announced the election, when one of the conspirators, in a state of drunkenness, revealed that the real intention was to procure a charter for the incorporation of trustees. Father Berenyi then strictly forbade the announced election. So the evil was postponed for a time.³³

Meanwhile, Bishop Hughes had realized the difficulty of coping with problems arising in regions so remote from his own episcopal city, especially as they seemed to increase instead of decrease in the course of years. He, therefore, applied to the Holy Father to divide the Diocese and to appoint his Coadjutor to the new See to be established at Albany, the Capital of the State. He sent a map of the State to Dr. Cullen, January 24, 1845, "to give a more accurate idea of its extent and increasing importance. The portion assigned to the contemplated See of Albany will still be too large; and you will observe, marked with circles of red ink, two other future Bishoprics, one in the western portion, the other in the northern portion, Rochester and Plattsburg. But of these, as new Bishops will have to be recommended, it is unnecessary to speak at present. The subjects will be brought before the Bishops of the next Provincial Council, which will probably be the last till the division of the Province.

"One Bishop residing at the extremity of the Diocese is not sufficient for the right government of all, especially with the great increase of missionaries. Just imagine, seven or eight of my priests, if they wish to visit me on business, must travel 500 miles. Indeed, this ought to be divided into four dioceses: New York, Albany, Plattsburg, and Rochester—and I have marked on the Map what may be their limits, taking in for Plattsburg a remote portion of the Diocese of Boston. But at present, the erection of Albany into an Episcopal See and the appointment of Dr. McCloskey will be sufficient."³⁴

³³ TIMON, o. c., pp. 232, 234 ss.

³⁴ *Records Am. Cath. Hist. Soc.*, vol. VIII, p. 485-6—*Papers relating to the Church of America. From the Portfolios of the Irish College at Rome*, (p. 154).

In 1847, Bishop Hughes was successful in his efforts to get a division of his vast diocese. Two new Sees were established, one at Albany, the other, however, at Buffalo, and not at Rochester. It took another twenty years before the American prelates petitioned for the erection of the Diocese of Rochester. Bishop McQuaid, its first Bishop, paid his first visit to his future episcopal city as an observant ecclesiastical student, in the summer of 1846. He grew up amidst the people who settled in this country between 1830 and 1850, and whom he was thus well qualified to describe in his sermon at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore. Although misguided at times by a number of cunning rascals—according to Archbishop Hughes in 1852, not more than eighteen in all in Rochester and Buffalo together³⁵—we must not allow the vices of these men to close our eyes to the virtues of the people at large, to which Bishop McQuaid does generous justice.

“The first immigrants coming in large numbers were from Ireland. Of all the peoples of Europe, they were best fitted to open the way for religion in a new country. Brave by nature, inured to poverty and hardship, just released from a struggle unto death for the faith, accustomed to the practice of religion in its simplest forms, cherishing dearly their priests whom they had learned to support directly, actively engaged in building humble chapels on the sites of ruined churches and in replacing altars, they were not appalled by the wretchedness of religious equipments and surroundings in their new homes on this side of the Atlantic. The priest was always the priest, no matter where they found him, or from what country he had come; the Mass was always the Mass, no matter where it was offered up. They had lived among the bitterest foes and had never quailed or flinched; misrepresentations and calumnies, sneers and scorn made no impression on their faithful hearts. Men who prefer death to denial of Christ are not cowards or traitors. In such a school of discipline, they had been trained to do missionary work. They and their descendants have not, in a new hemisphere, unlearned the lessons taught at home.

“Quickly following the Irish came the Germans from all parts of the fatherland. They, too, were a sturdy race, able to hold their own. Many of them had also known persecution for religion’s sake;

³⁵ Arch. Hughes, Circular to the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of New York, March 16, 1852. KEOHE, *Works*, vol. II, pp. 719-20.

most of them remembered the stories of bloody times which had come to them among the traditions of their hearths. They were prompt to rival their Irish brethren in building up the Church. At home they had their old parish churches, with the chants and ceremonial which lend to religion much that is consoling and instructive. The religious traditions and glories of the old land they sought to emulate in this. Better than all, they have stood fast by the duty of maintaining Christian schools for Christian children. There is much they can copy from the Irish, and much that the Irish can learn from the Germans. All the other nationalities of Europe can kneel at their feet and imbibe salutary and profitable lessons.”⁸⁶

FREDERICK J. ZWIERLEIN,

Docteur en sciences morales et historiques (Louvain).

⁸⁶ Bishop McQuaid, *Sermon on Catholic Church in the United States*, in the *Memorial Volume Third Plenary Council of Baltimore*, p. 168.